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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

classify them in advance, which would allow the group to discuss implementation in greater depth.

4. The Chairperson suggested that at future sessions, her working group might meet with non-governmental organizations to conduct a thematic discussion on a particular area. She suggested that Working Group I should discuss the role of the pre-session, in particular given that the Committee would now have two sessions per year. She suggested that reports for consideration by the Committee would now need to be identified two sessions in advance and that it might well be more appropriate for the pre-session to be held at the end of the previous session, as is the practice of some other human rights treaty bodies. In addition, she raised the question of specialization of Committee members and the use of concluding comments in future consideration of implementation of the Convention in individual States parties.

5. A number of members of the Committee commented on the suggestions put forward by the Chairperson of the working group. One member suggested that if the group met at the end of the previous session, the work of the States parties and non-governmental organizations would be facilitated and a dialogue could be entered into with States parties.

6. One member suggested that there was no reason to employ different procedures for initial and periodic reports. Other members suggested that the most difficult task was to compare first and periodic reports. Another suggested that the pre-session working group, which met before the current session, should have reviewed reports selected for consideration for the July session, as this would allow for richer questions from the Committee, give non-governmental organizations an opportunity to intervene and States parties time to answer the questions. It was stressed that as the working group consisted of only four members of the Committee, all other Committee members should send their questions with regard to periodic reports well in advance so that they could be integrated by the Secretariat. She also urged the dispatch of non-governmental organization reports well in advance.

7. The Chairperson of the pre-session working group explained that in previous sessions the Committee had decided not to consider initial reports in the working group because it was important to establish a direct constructive dialogue with the State party. She noted that the Committee's concluding comments facilitated the maintenance of that dialogue and urged that those formulated at the current session should follow the articles of the Convention and be as complete as possible. She noted that the concluding comments were an invaluable basis for the consideration of the subsequent report of the States party.

8. A number of members suggested that the pre-session working group should continue to review periodic reports only and not initial reports. A number of members urged the development of specialization amongst Committee members, making it clear that specialization would not preclude general discussion by members. Support was expressed for specialization amongst members and it was suggested that experts should identify annually the area in which they wished to specialize.

9. Other members urged that reports for consideration be selected 12 months in advance and be considered at a working group at the session in advance of the session at which they were to be considered. In that context, one member suggested that the analysis of reports provided by the Secretariat be simplified and contain the text of reservations entered by the State party, and whether they had been amended or withdrawn, and the concluding comments of the Committee and other treaty bodies with regard to the State.

10. It was noted that the Committee required more organized procedures and that steps were needed to ensure that questions for the State party were sent well in advance so that written replies could be provided, allowing the Committee duly to discuss issues with the State party. Some members noted that the Committee was a large one and that members should speak once, rather than repeat questions already posed. The Committee concluded that the issues raised were properly the province of Working Group I, but that if a decision were made to change the procedures of the Committee, some bridging measures would be required. In that context, it was suggested that the guidelines for reporting might warrant revision, as might the methods of work of the Committee.